

### ABSTRACT

This invention provides a system for speech recognition comparing speech against stored character strings in memory. Speech is transformed into spoken character strings. To accelerate the identification, a small group of characters from the stored character strings and  
5 the spoken character string are compared and the probabilities for identification may be calculated from those results. Those stored patterns, where the probability for identifying the speech exceeds a predetermined value, may be selected for further processing. The selected strings may have the remaining characters added to the group of characters for the next comparison. Alternatively, the number of characters for comparison may be incremented by  
10 a predetermined number in a step-by-step fashion, reducing the number of comparisons in subsequent steps as the probabilities for identification rise. The character string in memory with the highest probability for the identification match may be recognized as the character string identifying the speech.